



STORAGE NEWS

■ RESTRICTED ACCESS

LaCie has launched a range of biometric fingerprint-protected mobile hard disks. Biometric fingerprint readers look for terminal points, the ends of ridges or places where the print splits in two. A recessed swipe reader on each drive uses embedded software to restrict access. The drives use 2½" disks spinning at 5,400rpm and connect through USB Hi-Speed. They're housed in the same FA Porsche-designed cases as standard LaCie mobile hard disks. The 40GB version costs £105 including VAT, and the 80GB version costs £135 including VAT. Both are available now.

■ LITTLE BIG DISK

Seagate has announced the world's first 2½" hard disk to use perpendicular recording. This new technology allows manufacturers to fit more data on the surface of hard disk platters. The Momentus 5400.3 range will store up to 160GB, but won't be available until the end of the year. Hitachi and Toshiba are also developing products based on the technology.



■ BIG BIG DISK

Maxtor is promoting its forthcoming 500GB desktop hard disk. The firm has announced that desktop hard disks with half a terabyte of storage space will be on sale very soon. Parallel ATA and SATA versions will be available, but as we went to press no prices were available.

REVIEW HARD DISK TOOL

DISKOLOGY Disk Jockey MkII

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £230 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.span.com

DETAILS www.diskology.com

The Disk Jockey is a tool for working with Parallel ATA hard disks. It's a palm-sized aluminium box with two simple controls and connectors for two disks. It's easy to use: simply plug in the drive and its power supply, select the mode you want and push the button to start it working.

Despite its simplicity, the Disk Jockey can do some extremely clever things. It can copy one disk to another without a PC, as long as the



destination drive is larger than the source. It can also connect to your PC via USB or FireWire, allowing you

to mount the disks alone or as mirrored or spanned volumes. Other modes allow you to test or erase disks. It's expensive, but IT managers or technicians should find it worth its weight in gold. We're hoping Diskology will make an even smaller SATA version.

Tom Royal



Dozens of handy functions in a tiny silver box



Expensive; needs adaptor to work with SATA disks

SPECIFICATIONS Hard disk tool, supports 2½" and 3½" Parallel ATA disks with UDMA, ATA, USB and FireWire connectors

REVIEW INTERNAL DVD WRITER

LITE-ON SOHW-1693

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £40 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.cannings.co.uk

DETAILS www.liteon.com



The SOHW-1693 performed well in our tests, taking just six minutes to burn a 4.5GB DVD+R disc. It took under 26 and a half minutes to complete an 8.5GB DVD+R DL disc, and a DVD-R DL took 27 minutes and 41 seconds. Lite-On supplies an alternative black bezel and a decent software bundle that includes an OEM version of Ahead's Nero suite.

This is a fast, flexible DVD writer. At just £40, it's also excellent value.

Simon Handby



A fast, flexible drive



Looks plain

SPECIFICATIONS Internal double-layer DVD+/-RW drive, 16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL, 48X CD-R, 24X CD-RW. Part code SOHW-1693S23C

HOTLIST DVD WRITER

LG GSA-4163B

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £37 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.microdirect.co.uk

DETAILS www.lge.com



Winner of our July 2005 DVD writer group test, LG's GSA-4163B has since dropped its price by an incredible £12. It's still available with its impressive software bundle and is one of the few drives to offer DVD-RAM compatibility. Compatibility isn't its only asset, though: it was also one of the fastest drives in the test, burning a full DVD+R in five minutes 36 seconds.



SPECIFICATIONS 16X DVD+R, 16X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 3X DVD-RAM, 40X CD-R, 24X CD-RW. Part code GSA-4163B

HOTLIST PORTABLE HARD DRIVE

WESTERN DIGITAL Passport 80GB

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £103 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.techstore.co.uk

DETAILS www.wdc.com



Western Digital's rubber-bottomed Passport is an excellent portable disk. It's a little bigger than a PDA and weighs just 238g, so it's easy to carry around. Inside is a 2½" hard disk that provides 80GB of storage. It connects via USB Hi-Speed and provides the kind of transfer speeds usual for such a disk: large files transfer at around 22MB/s and small files at 7MB/s. It's ideal as a second notebook hard disk or as portable file storage.



SPECIFICATIONS 80GB capacity, USB Hi-Speed interface, USB powered. Part code WDXML800UETE

HOTLIST INTERNAL HARD DISK

MAXTOR DiamondMax 10 300GB SATA

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £121 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.komplett.co.uk

DETAILS www.maxtor.com



The DiamondMax 10 replaces Maxtor's DiamondMax 9 series of hard disks and is an even better drive. It has 16MB of cache and a SATA interface, making this 300GB hard disk the fastest we've seen. This disk is also extremely good value. If you're looking for more storage then this is the best drive to buy.



SPECIFICATIONS 3.5" internal hard disk, 300GB capacity, 279GB formatted capacity (NTFS), SATA/150 interface, 7200rpm spin speed, 16MB cache. Part code 6B300S0